

paigning for a neurologist to visit the city once every few months.

The Neurological Council of WA is pushing for the specialist doctor to visit once every two or three months to attend to the large number of neurological patients in the Great Southern.

Bunbury and Geraldton both have visiting neurologists.

Neurological Council of WA ad-

Ms Hughes recently completed a postgraduate certificate in community neurological nursing at Murdoch University, the only course like it in the world, and said in particular she cared for a large number of people with Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis in their own homes.

"Because there's no neurologist in the Great Southern, we have all

not for long distances. "So as well as the cost of the bus or flight they also have to pay for accommodation up there and some need their carers to come too, it is so much time, stress and money."

Ms Hughes said her colleagues in Perth had been trying to recruit a doctor to visit the city, as general practitioners based in Albany

gining machine once it was installed, she said.

Health Consumers Council executive director Frank Prokop said neurological services were very important, and journeys to Perth added to patients' stress loads.

"We're not talking about a service for Narrogin or Mt Barker, this is Albany, a hub," he said.

"A visit every couple of months is a modest ask."



Albany community neurological nurse Tania Hughes is calling for a neurologist to visit Albany.

Picture: Laurie Benson

PhD student finds town port safe and Sound

■ Lisa Morrison

The waters of King George Sound are free from an invasive marine pest that has the potential to devastate Albany's fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries, according to research by University of WA plant biology school and oceans institute PhD student Tiffany Simpson.

Ms Simpson launched two devices called settlement arrays from Albany Port in November, which act as habitat for foreign larval species introduced into Australian waters by visiting vessels.

The devices were retrieved last month and analysed for the presence of more than 250 invasive varieties, as part of Federal Government research program to monitor the bio-security of WA's busiest ports.

"Fortunately, from a bio-security point of view, I did not see any species of concern from the national invasive species trigger list," Ms Simpson said. "One of the aims of this project was to see if the inva-



Tiffany Simpson retrieves the settlement arrays used to track marine pests in Albany Port. Picture: Laurie Benson

sive colonial ascidian *didemnum perlucidum* was present in the Albany Port ... Hillarys Boat Harbour definitely has it, possibly Geraldton and Dampier, and other ports including Broome and Esperance haven't been analysed yet."

She said the tropical plant species, which originates from the Gulf of Mexico, was discovered growing in sea grass in the Swan River rather than on boat hulls or harbour structures, for the first time last year.

"Although I found a couple of colonies that look somewhat like *didemnum perlucidum*, they are more likely native species but I have submitted them for molecular bar-coding to confirm," Ms Simpson said.

"I plan to repeat the process in June to determine if there is much seasonal change throughout the regions during cooler periods ... it will be interesting to see how the community from Albany Port compares with others."